

**CHARLOTTE FIRE DEPARTMENT  
& RURAL FIRE ASSOCIATION  
111 E. Lawrence Avenue**

**CHARLOTTE  
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**MICHIGAN  
48813**

**KEVIN FULLERTON  
Fire Chief**

November 18, 2020

To: Bryan Myrkle – Community Development Director

Re: Old School Village – 301 Horatio St.

As the site plan for this project has just been turned in and the process is moving forward to the Planning Commission, we feel this project is in the best interest for the City and community as it will assist with taking care of problems our departments are dealing with on a regular basis.

First, on the code enforcement and Building side, we have taken multiple complaints and have worked with the current owner of the property to make the building as safe as possible.

On October 13<sup>th</sup> 2020, we completed an inspection of the exterior\interior of the property, and have found the following:

1. The outdoor area on all sides of the building is well maintained--grass is mowed and trimmed, areas have been landscaped, the fence is in good repair, including the privacy fence near the parking lot.
2. Outdoor benches and picnic area ( with grill ) are cleaned and well maintained
3. Parking lot is in good shape as are the sidewalks and entrance to the occupied part of the building. ( apartments )
4. The West side of the building has two windows that are covered with unpainted plywood . The West side is of brick construction and appears to be in good shape.
5. The South side of the building is of brick construction, and there is a large window covered with unpainted plywood in the unoccupied portion of the building..( new gym entrance )
6. The North side of the building, also made of brick construction ( which is in good shape ) has 4 windows covered with unpainted plywood, 2 doors covered with unpainted plywood and one broken window that is not covered. ( on the second floor )
7. The East side of the building has numerous ( 30 or more ) windows and doors covered with unpainted plywood and one 2nd floor door open and not covered. ( this door is not accessible because the outside stairs have been removed ) There is some debris ( bricks, brush, trash ) located in the outside pool deck area. There are two metal electrical cabinets and three old transformers ( all unhooked ) located on the asphalt drive on this side of the building. ( we would assume that the power company is going to pick up this equipment ) The dumpster is also located on this side of the

building and it was clean with no trash around the dumpster. The East side is also constructed of brick and we do not see any structural problems outside.

8. The interior of the building that is not occupied by the apartments has major problems with water leaks which have caused structural problems inside of the middle building ( the original school, 1914 ) The rest of the buildings ( pool area, new gym, auditorium, old gym ) show signs of deterioration but not yet structural damage.

As we stand with the Fire Department, due to the structural problems in the un-occupied areas of the building, we will not send any firefighters interior for a fire with any heavy smoke conditions. We will evacuate and try our best to contain the fire with exterior operations. This type of fire would be devastating to the area, as most likely the building would collapse into the street and/or adjacent properties.

It has been clear over the last year, Charlotte has larger homeless population than past years. We also have seen evidence of people "camping out" inside the building when we conducted inspections. Typical fires in these unoccupied buildings normally are the result of people using an open fire for heat. This again worries us, not only to the hazard of a large fire, but the fact we may need to worry about lives inside the already damaged structure at any time.

As stated above, we feel that this opportunity could take care of this impending hazard and eye sore for the community, before a catastrophic event may take place. It would be unthinkable if this opportunity was passed on, and life or property is lost in the coming years because of structural collapse or fire inside the building.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Respectfully,

Kevin Fullerton  
Fire Chief / Building Official